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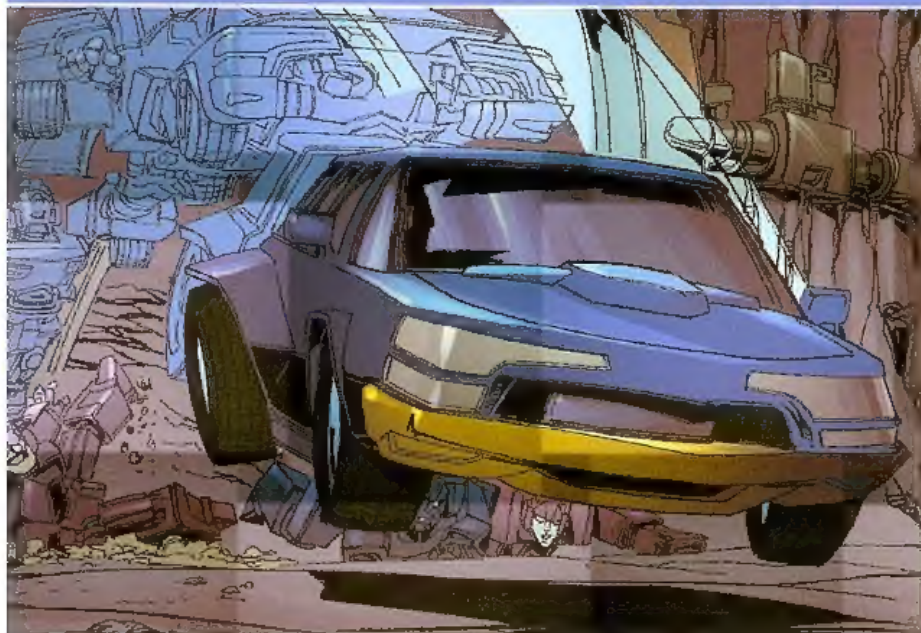
THE TRANSFORMERS SPOTLIGHT



NIGHTBEAT



Cover by MD Bright



THE TRANSFORMERS:
SPOTLIGHT #2

NIGHTBEAT

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A lone wolf, ceaselessly questing, searching for answers to problems big and small, his irregular and unconventional logic, combined with a keen, probing intellect, makes him perfect for the toughest, most convoluted investigations. He loves nothing more than a mystery, the bigger the better, and he never, ever gives up once he has the scent. His name...

...IS NIGHTBEAT.



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Special thanks to Hasbro's Aaron Archer, Elizabeth Griffin, Amie Lozanski and Richard Zambarano for their invaluable assistance.

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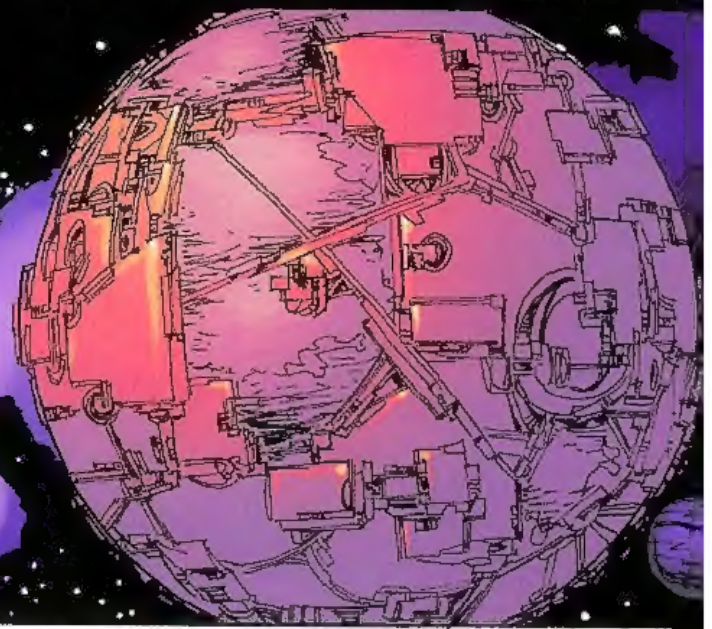
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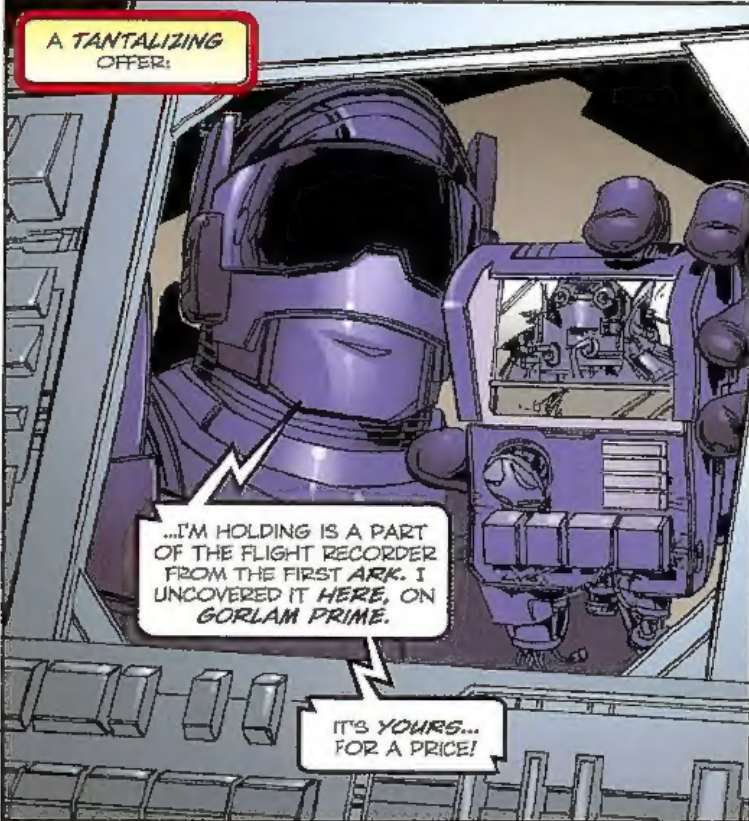
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PLANET:



A TANTALIZING
OFFER:



...I'M HOLDING IS A PART
OF THE FLIGHT RECORDER
FROM THE FIRST ARK. I
UNCOVERED IT *HERE*, ON
GORLAM PRIME.

IT'S *YOURS*...
FOR A PRICE!

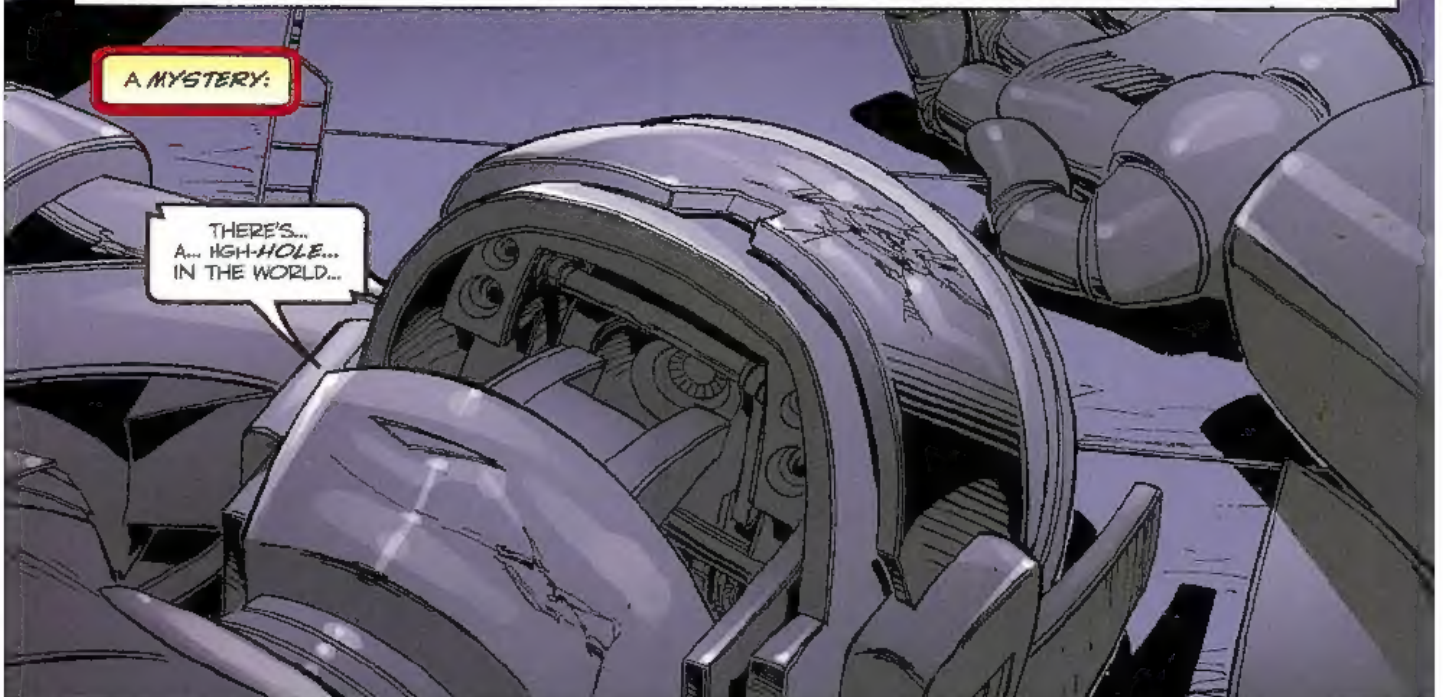
A RENDEZVOUS:




...READING *ONE*
LIFE SIGN, VERY
FAINT...

A MYSTERY:

THERE'S...
A... *HIGH-HOLE*...
IN THE WORLD...





THE NAME'S
NIGHTBEAT.
SOLVING MYSTERIES
IS WHAT I DO.


I START WITH
THE BASICS...

WHO?
WHAT? WHY?


KRAKON:

NATIVE OF THE PLANET
HYPERION—MERCENARY,
ADVENTURER, EXPLORER... A
TRADER IN EVERYTHING
FROM OUTLAWED WEAPONRY
TO "UNUSUAL" ARTIFACTS.

CAUSE OF
DEATH...




...UNKNOWN.
UNNATURAL
CERTAINLY.



IT'S LIKE THE LIFE
WAS JUST SUCKED
RIGHT OUT OF HIM.

SIGNS OF ACCELERATED
NECROSIS, BUT SCANS
READ NEGATIVE FOR
TOXINS, CORROSIVE
SUBSTANCES OR NERVE
AGENTS.

MOTIVE:



THEFT? REVENGE?
SANCTION? FOR A "MECH"
IN KRAKON'S LINE OF
WORK, THE POSSIBILITIES
ARE ENDLESS. I IMAGINE HE
UPSET A LOT OF PEOPLE.

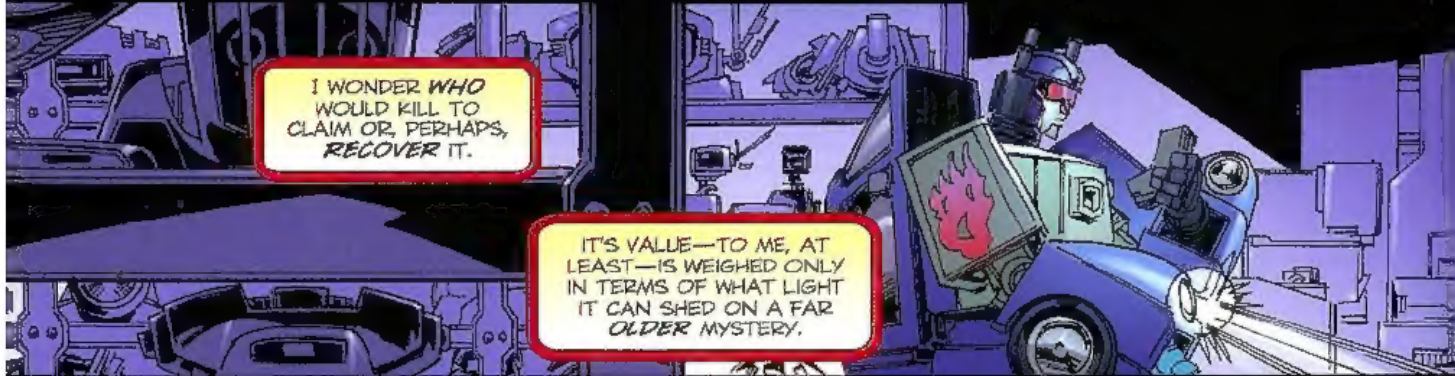
BUT IF IT
WAS THEFT...



...IT WAS A VERY
SPECIFIC THEFT.


THERE'S A LOT OF VALUABLE
STUFF HERE, UNTOUCHED. BUT
AMONGST THE J'ORGAN
LANCES AND STARFIRE FUEL
CANISTERS AND CHIMERA
ORBS, I FIND NO TRACE...

...OF THE FLIGHT
RECORDER KRAKON
OFFERED ME.



I WONDER *WHO* WOULD KILL TO CLAIM OR, PERHAPS, RECOVER IT.

IT'S VALUE—TO ME, AT LEAST—IS WEIGHED ONLY IN TERMS OF WHAT LIGHT IT CAN SHED ON A FAR OLDER MYSTERY.




SIX-POINT-TWO MILLION META-CYCLES AGO THE FIRST STAR-GOING VESSEL TO BEAR THE NAME *ARK* WAS LAUNCHED. ITS MISSION—TO PLOT SAFE PASSAGE BETWEEN THE CYBERTRONIAN QUADRANT AND THE BENZULI EXPANSE.



TWENTY THOUSAND ASTRO-CYCLES OUT...




...IT *DISAPPEARED*. ALL HANDS LOST.




SINCE THAT TIME, HARD FACTS HAVE BECOME *LEGENDS*. THE SCANT RECORDED DATA TURNED—BY WORD OF MOUTH—INTO *APOCRYPHA*. SOME BELIEVE IT'S THE ONE MYSTERY THAT SHOULD BE LEFT *UNSOLVED*.



I DON'T.



"UNCOVERED." THAT
WAS HOW KRAKON PUT
IT. "UNCOVERED... ON
GORLAM PRIME."



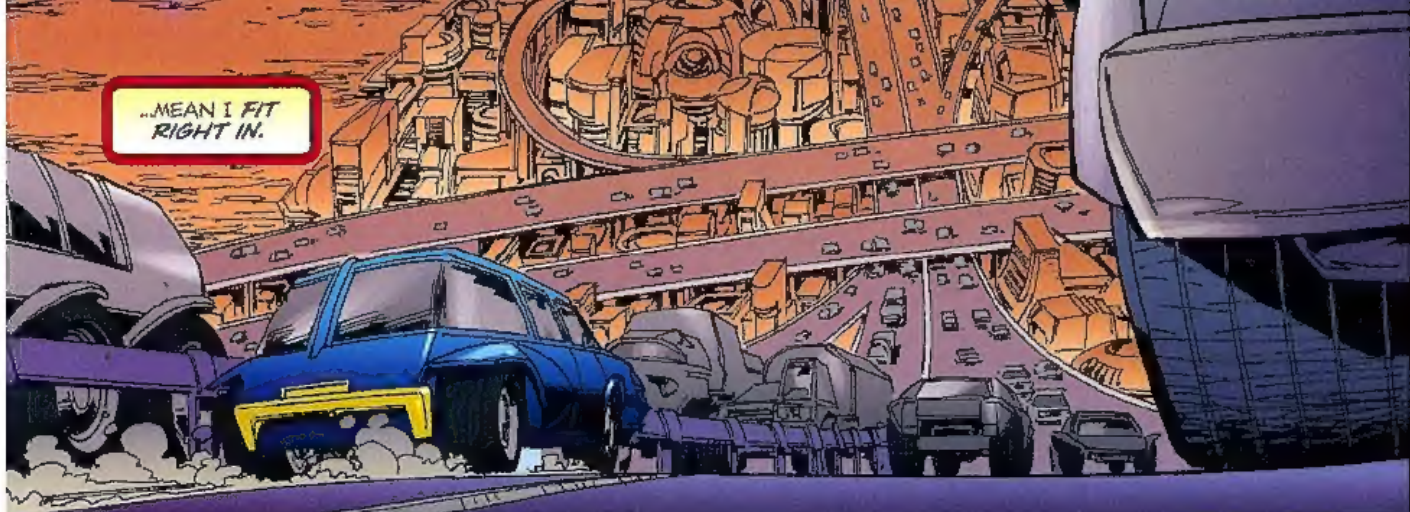
ORBITAL JUMP.
NOT THE NICEST
WAY TO TRAVEL...

...BUT IT GETS YOU
DOWN *FAST*, SLIPS
YOU PAST ANY KIND
OF LOCAL SENSOR
NETWORK.

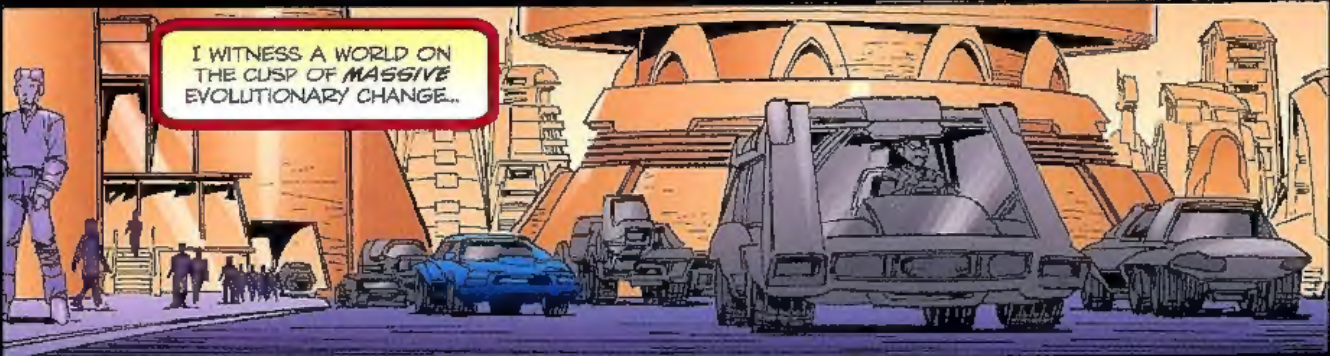
TECHNOLOGICALLY ADVANCED
AS THEY ARE, THE LOCAL INHABITANTS
ARE *UNUSED* TO OFFWORLDERS.




AND THE *REFINEMENTS*
I HAD MADE TO MY
EXOSTRUCTURE...



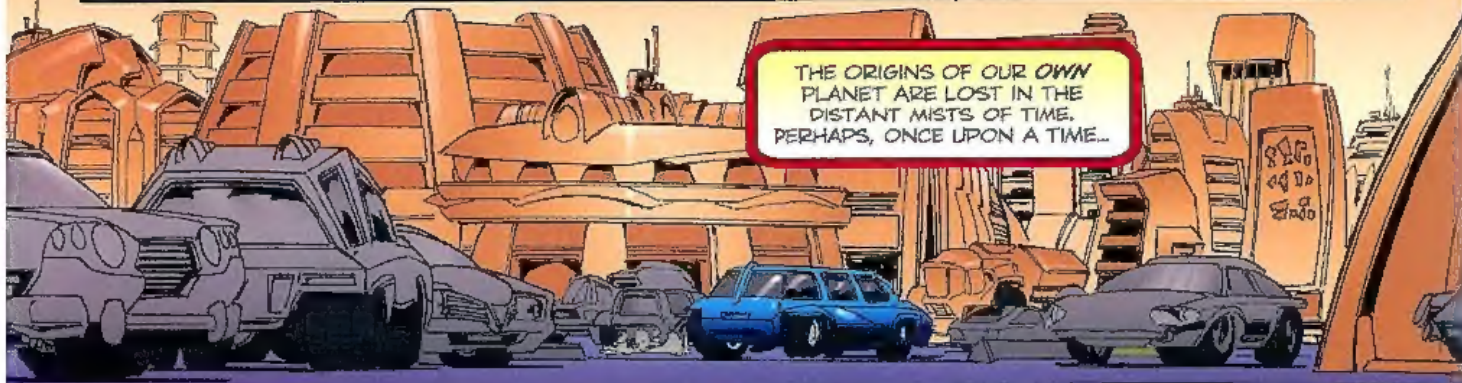
...MEAN I FIT
RIGHT IN.



I WITNESS A WORLD ON
THE CUSP OF **MASSIVE**
EVOLUTIONARY CHANGE...




THE INHABITANTS CLEARLY
UPGRADING FROM ORGANIC TO
BIOMECHANICAL, AND I *WONDER*.



THE ORIGINS OF OUR **OWN**
PLANET ARE LOST IN THE
DISTANT MISTS OF TIME.
PERHAPS, ONCE UPON A TIME...




...CYBERTRON
WAS SOMETHING
LIKE THIS.



THE LOGS ON
KRAKON'S SHIP
REFERENCE A NUMBER
OF EXCAVATIONS.

THE FIRST THREE
YIELD NOTHING OF
GREAT IMPORT,
OTHER THAN...

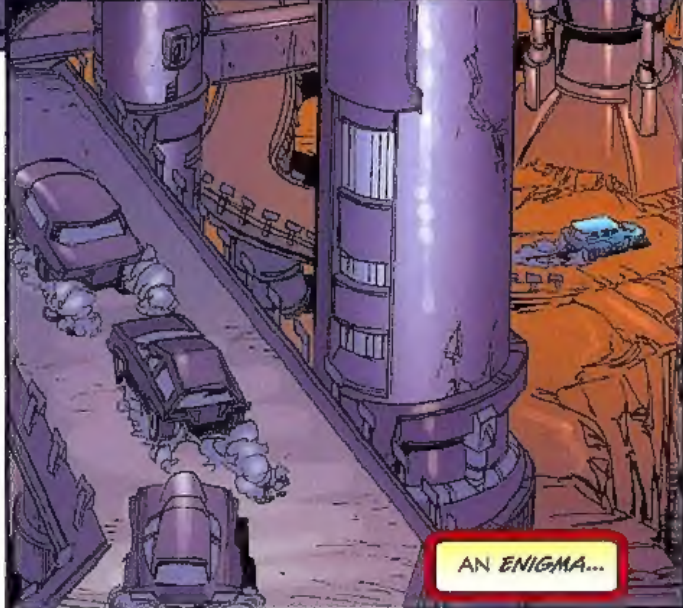
...AN INCONGRUITY.



THE INDIGENT SOCIETY ON
GORLAM ONLY REACHED
FULL INDUSTRIAL
MATURITY SEVEN HUNDRED
STELLAR CYCLES AGO.
AND YET...

...THE GEOLOGICAL STRATA
REVEALED BY KRAKON'S
DIGGERS PROVE THAT
GORLAM ITSELF BEGAN ITS
TECHNOLOGICAL
EVOLUTION FAR EARLIER
ALL OF WHICH...

...SUGGESTS
OUTSIDE/OFFWORLD
MANIPULATION.



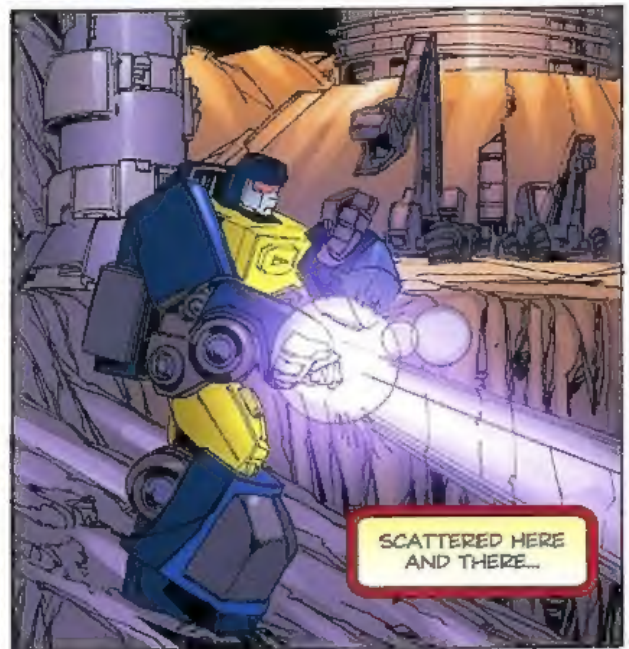
AN ENIGMA...



...WRAPPED IN
A MYSTERY.

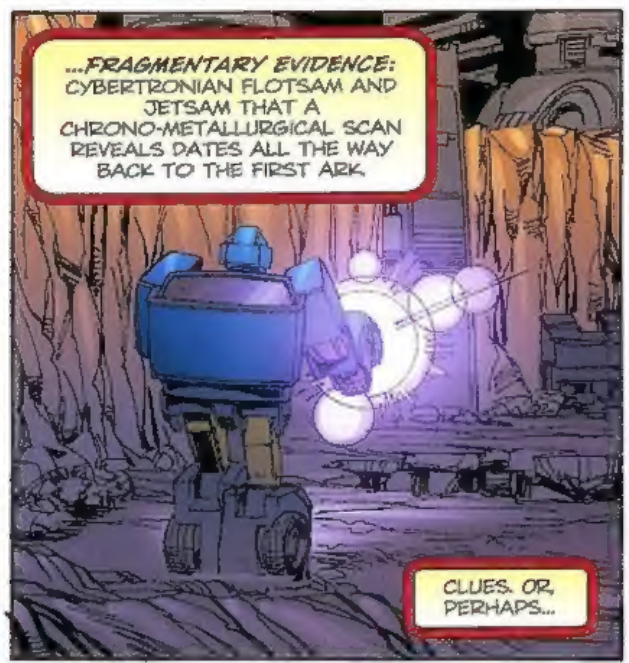
EXCAVATION
SITE NUMBER 4...

...YIELDS INTRIGUES
MORE *GERMANE* TO
MY INVESTIGATION.

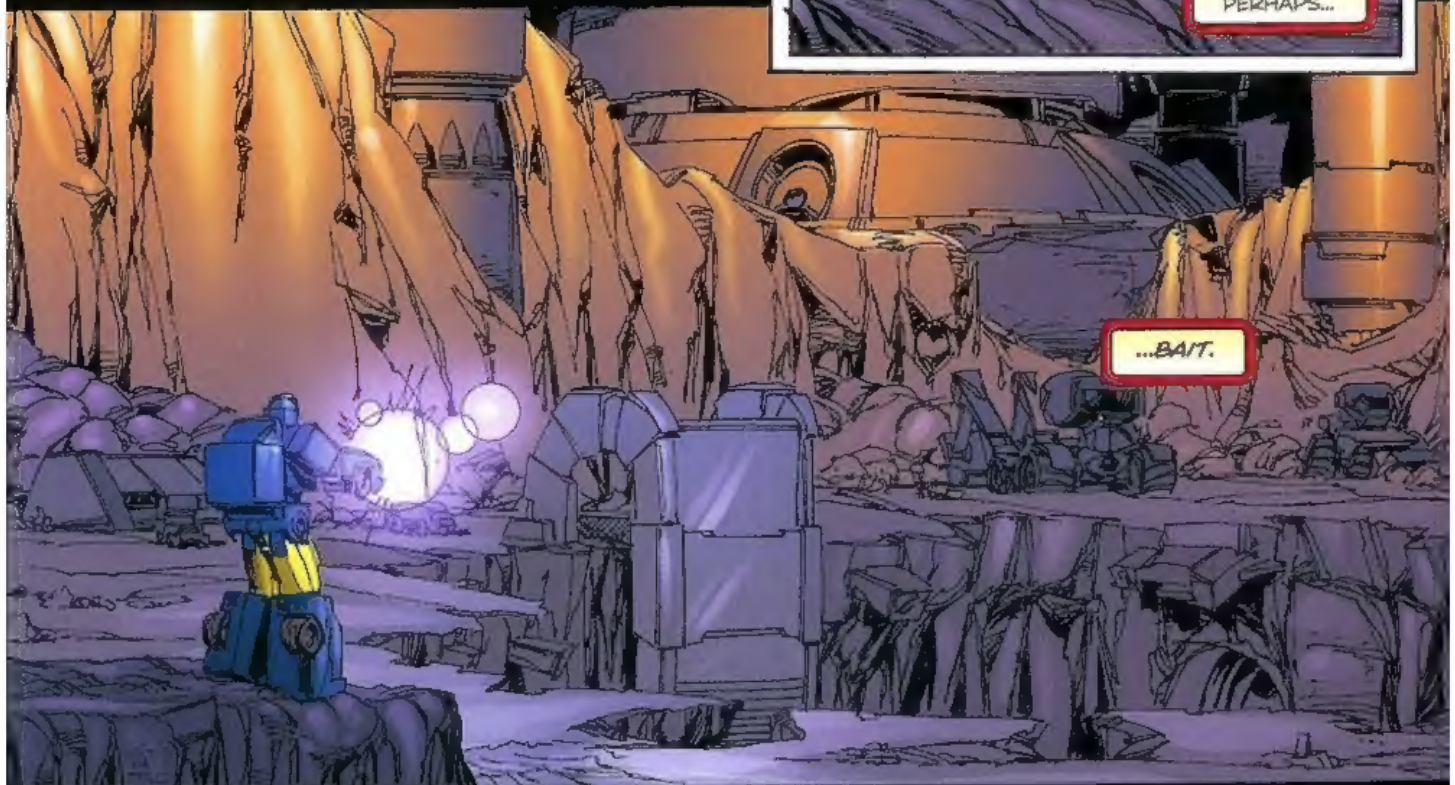


SCATTERED HERE
AND THERE...


...FRAGMENTARY EVIDENCE:
CYBERTRONIAN FLOTSAM AND
JETSAM THAT A
CHRONO-METALLURGICAL SCAN
REVEALS DATES ALL THE WAY
BACK TO THE FIRST ARK.




CLUES, OR
PERHAPS...



...BAIT.

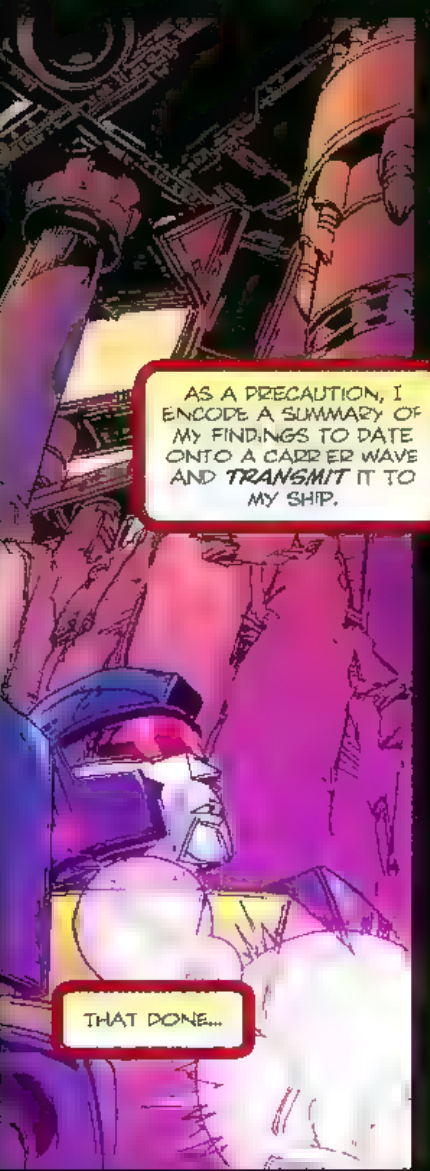


THE SHAFT PREDATES
THE WHOLE
SURROUNDING AREA.
IT'S OLD, VERY OLD.



AS I PROBE THE DEPTHS,
KRAKON'S LAST WORDS,
WRENCHED UP FROM SOME
DEEP, DARK PIT OF THEIR
OWN... REVERBERATE.

THERE'S... A...
HIGH HOLE... IN
THE WORLD...

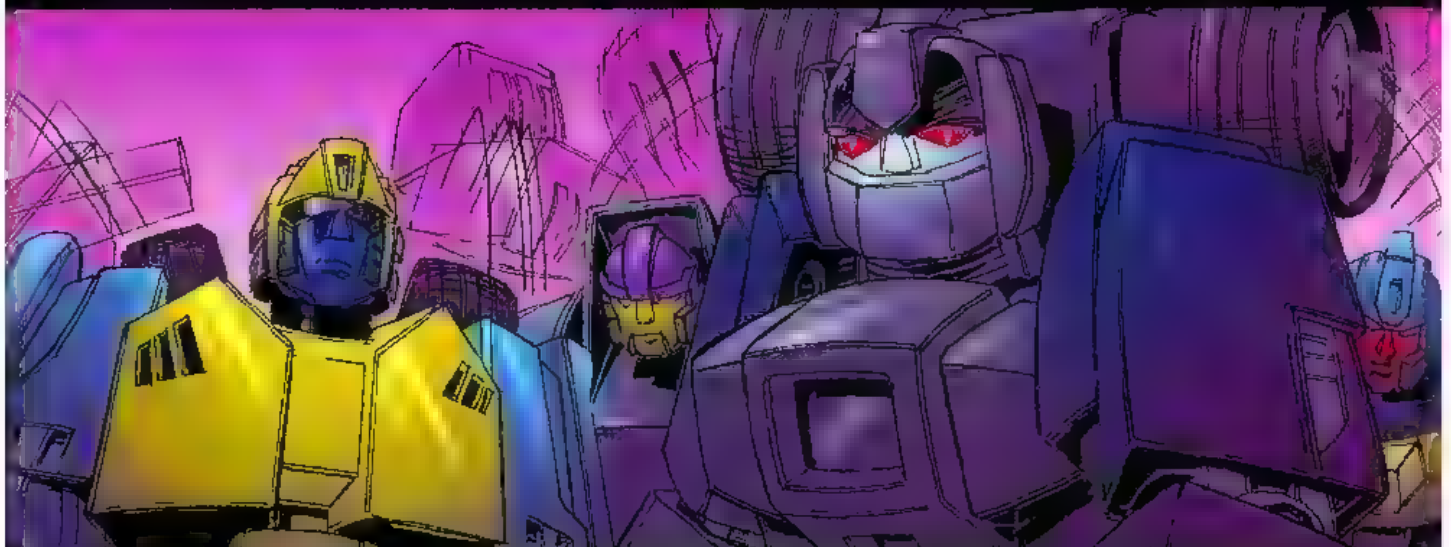


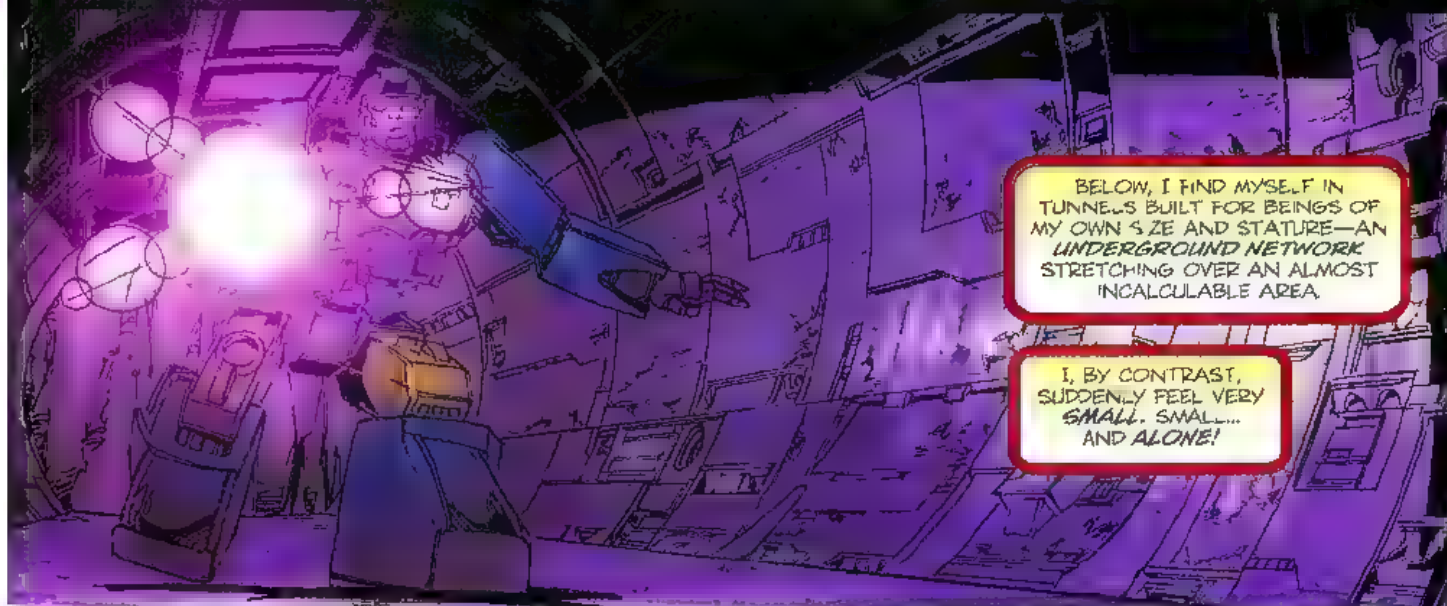
AS A PRECAUTION, I
ENCODE A SUMMARY OF
MY FINDINGS TO DATE
ONTO A CARRIER WAVE
AND TRANSMIT IT TO
MY SHIP.

THAT DONE...



...I GO
DOWN.

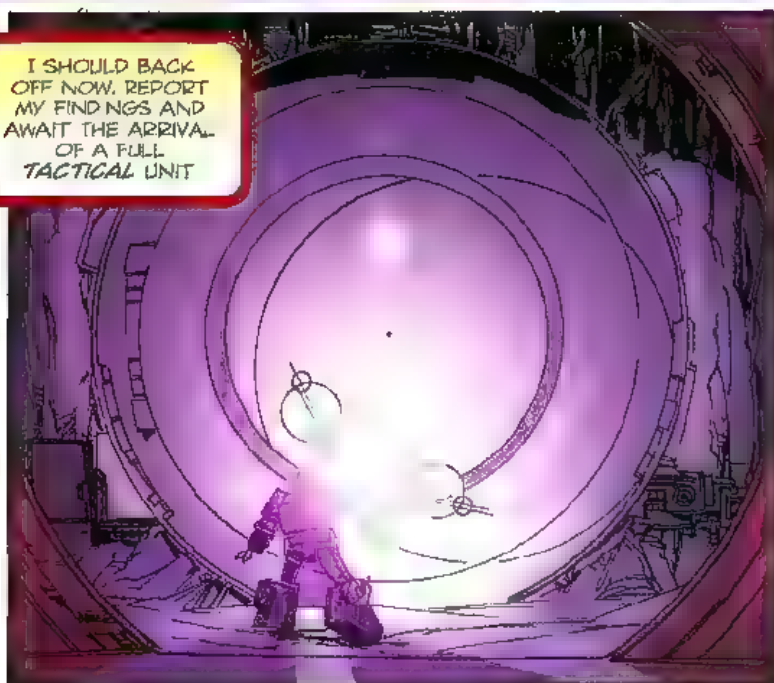




BELOW, I FIND MYSELF IN TUNNELS BUILT FOR BEINGS OF MY OWN SIZE AND STATURE—AN UNDERGROUND NETWORK STRETCHING OVER AN ALMOST INCALCULABLE AREA.

I, BY CONTRAST, SUDDENLY FEEL VERY SMALL... SMALL... AND ALONE!

I SHOULD BACK OFF NOW, REPORT MY FINDINGS AND AWAIT THE ARRIVAL OF A FULL TACTICAL UNIT

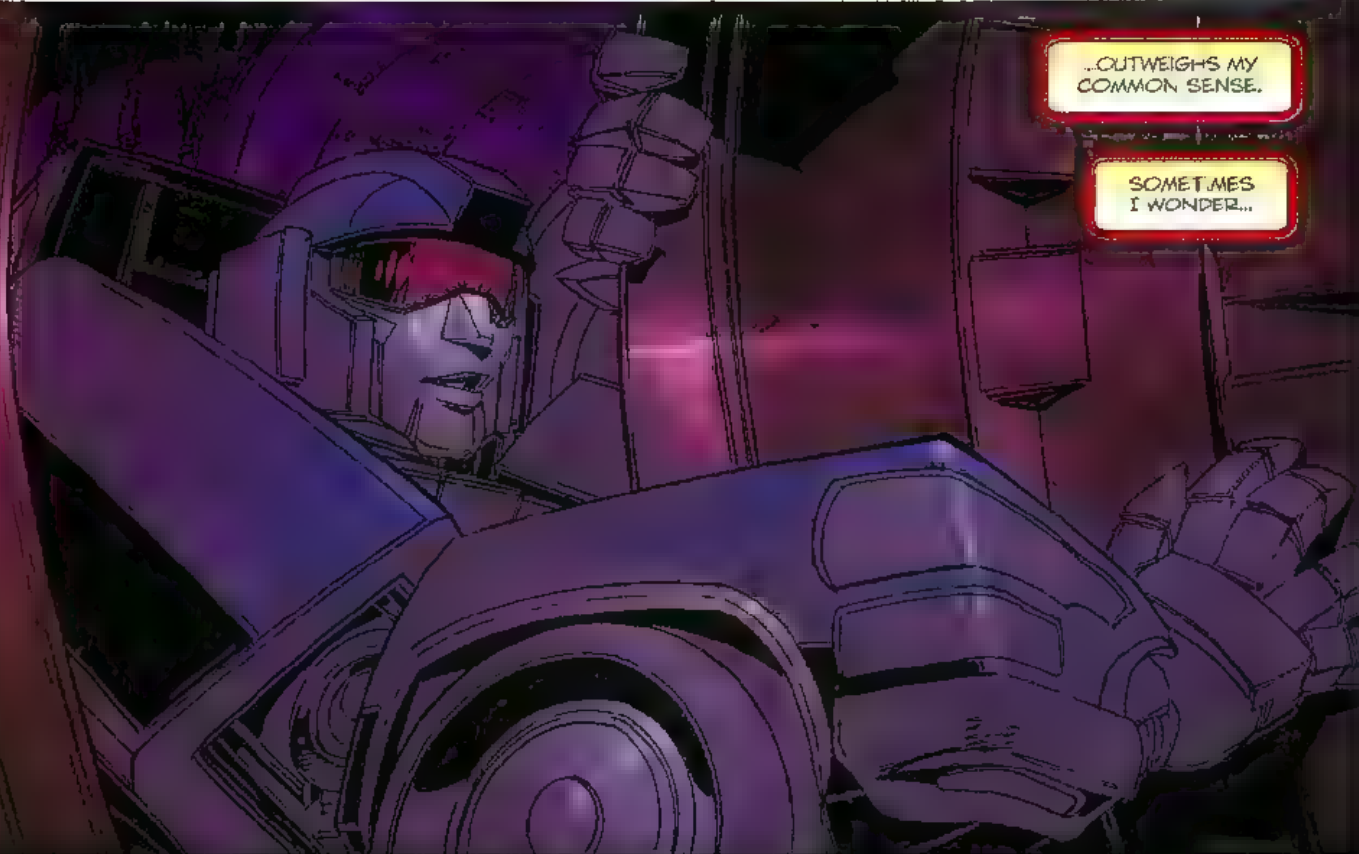



MY CURIOSITY, THOUGH...



...OUTWEIGHS MY COMMON SENSE.

SOMETIMES I WONDER...





...IF IT WILL BE THE
DEATH OF ME.

MY FIRST RATIONAL THOUGHT
IS... AN UNDERGROUND SEA OF
IMPOSSIBLE DIMENSIONS AND
INDETERMINATE NATURE.

BUT I QUICKLY
REJECT THAT
HYPOTHESIS.

IT'S A *PORTAL*.

SOME KIND OF
DIMENSIONAL
INTERFACE, BUT ON
A *MASSIVE* SCALE.

THERE'S A *HOLE*
IN THE WORLD.

I TEST THE
"SHALLOWS"...

...BUT RETREAT ALMOST
IMMEDIATELY A SENSE
OF THINGS *LONG-DEAD*
OVERPOWERING REASON
AND LOGIC.

TOO LATE,
I REALIZE
RETREAT...

...IS NO LONGER
AN OPTION.

CYBERTRONIAN...
NO DOUBT
ABOUT T...

...BUT OF A DESIGN
AND SOPHISTICATION
UNKNOWN TO ME.

ARE YOU--?

DO YOU...
HAVE NAMES?

THIS
PLACE... IS
IT... IS IT YOUR
HOME?

NOTHING.

JUST BLANK STARES
AND MINDLESS,
UNIFIED INTENT.

I SENSE,
RATHER THAN
SEE...

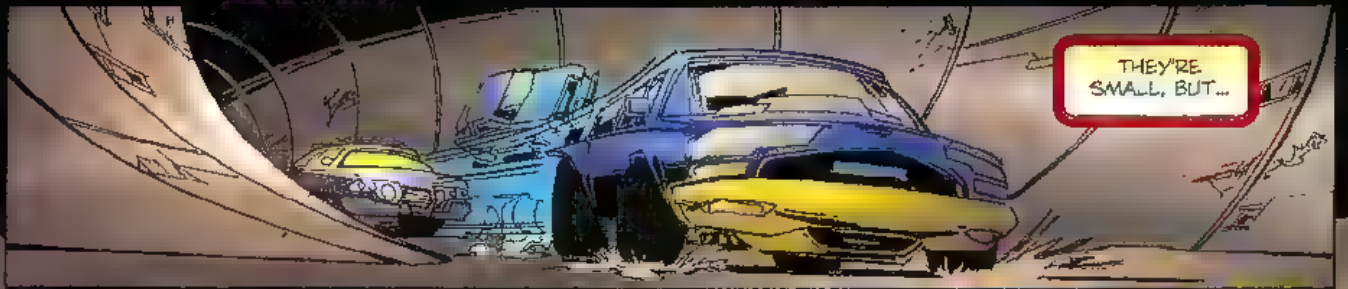
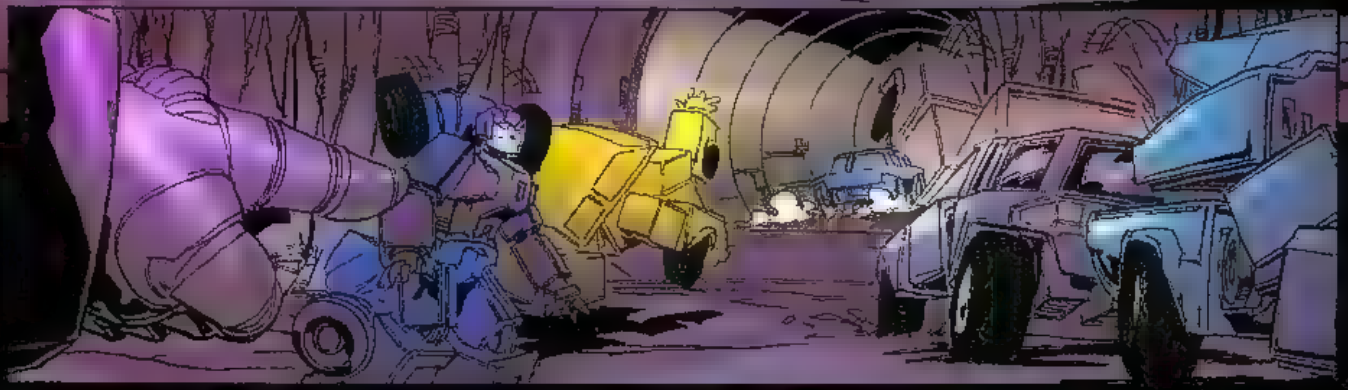
...FIGURES
EMERGING FROM
THE PORTA...

WITH UTTER AND
DREAD CERTAINTY,
I REALIZE...

...THEY HAVE
COME FOR ME!

AND WITH THE SAME
DIRE PRESCIENCE, I
KNOW...

I MUST NOT
ALLOW THAT
TO HAPPEN!



THEY'RE
SMALL, BUT...

...FAST, FASTER
THAN ME!

AND..

...THEY HAVE
TEETH!

HH-NH!

NEURAL
DISRUPTORS. THEY
WANT ME INTACT.

A SMALL MERCY...

THAT COULD
JUST WORK TO
MY ADVANTAGE.

POOM

POOM

ADD MANEUVERABLE TO
THE LIST I BEGIN TO FEEL
DISTINCTLY LIKE LAST
STELLAR CYCLE'S MODEL.

AND WHAT
HAPPENS NEXT...

...I DON'T
EVEN SEE!

GA-AAA!

FIM

FTM

FTM




I TAKE A SUDDEN
DETOUR.

WHICH, OF
COURSE...



...IS EXACTLY WHAT
THEY WANTED!



DEAD END.

IN MORE WAYS
THAN ONE...

HH-

-NNN!

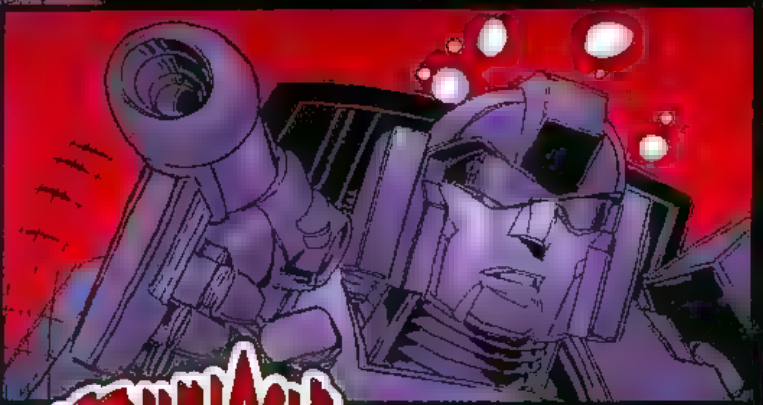
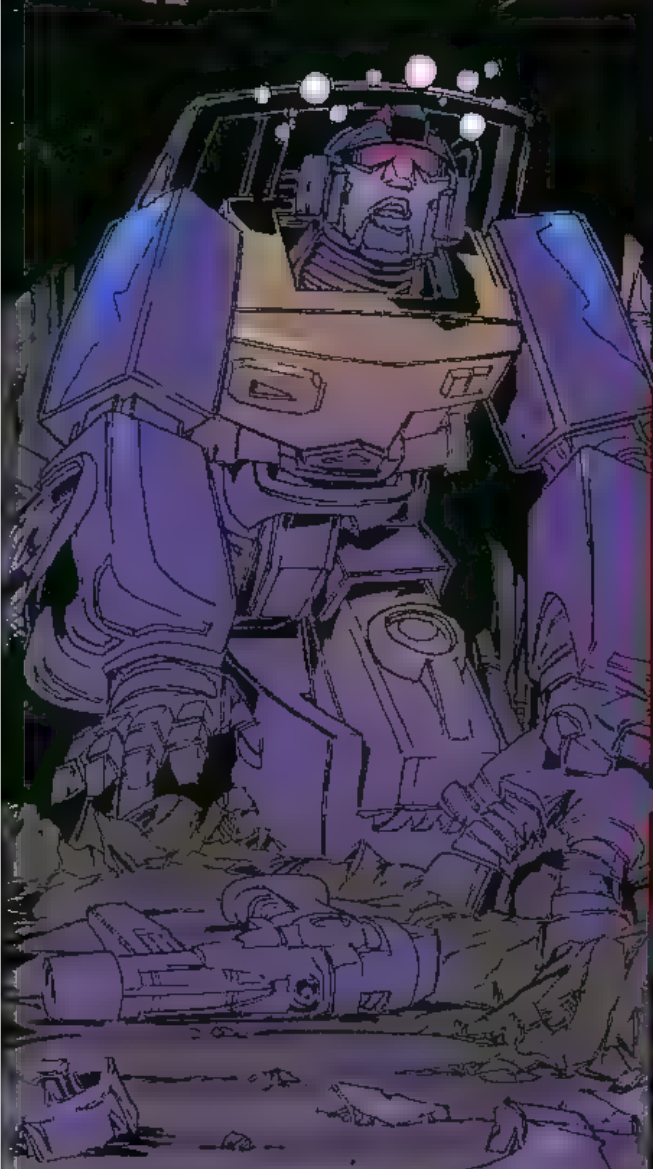
KRUMP

WELCOME,
NIGHTBEAT. WE
HAVE BEEN
EXPECTING YOU...

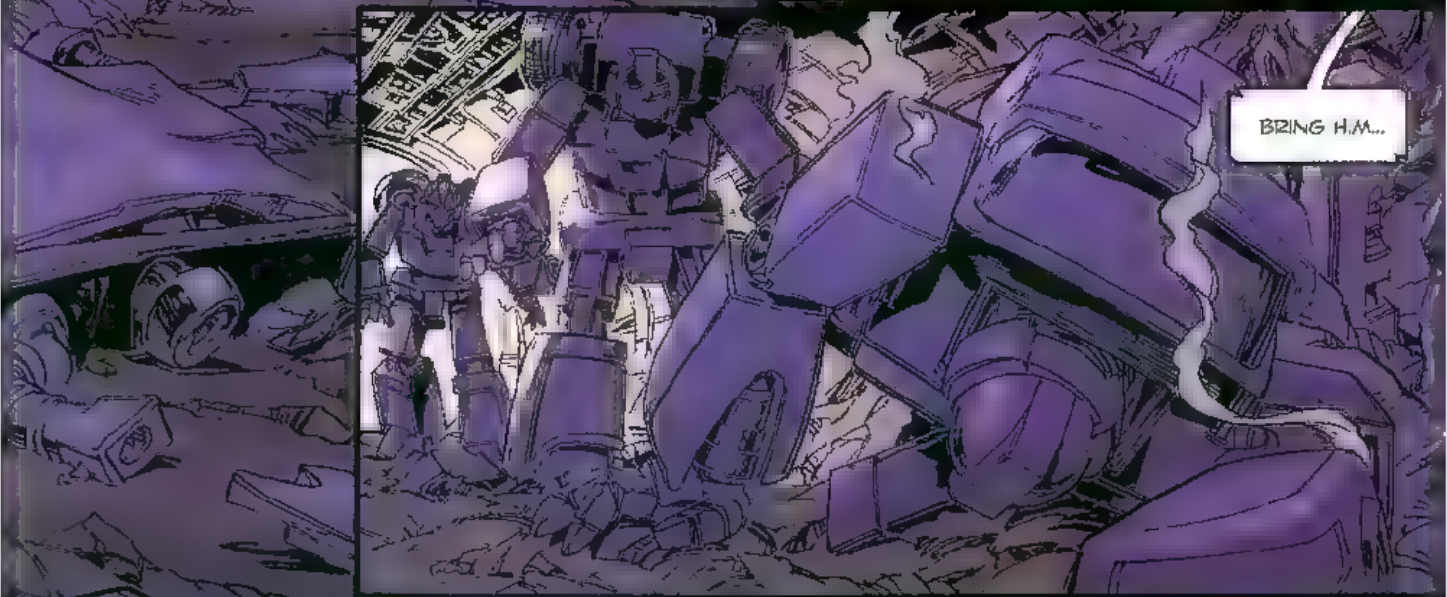
...WAITING
FOR YOU...

THE ANSWERS
YOU HAVE
SOUGHT...

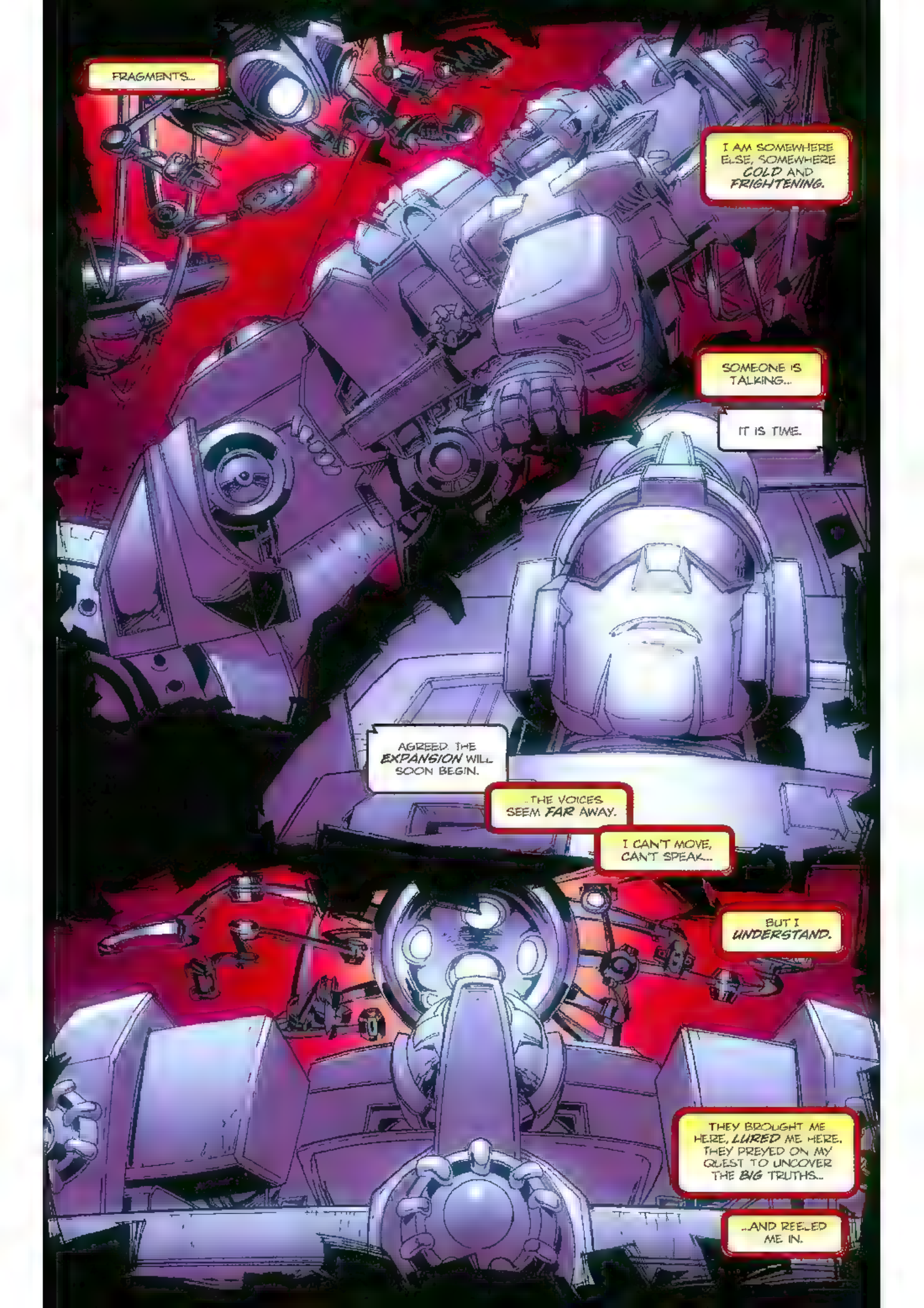
...ARE ALL
HERE!



GERUNACH!



BRING H.A.M...



FRAGMENTS...

I AM SOMEWHERE
ELSE, SOMEWHERE
COLD AND
FRIGHTENING.

SOMEONE IS
TALKING...

IT IS TIME.

AGREED. THE
EXPANSION WILL
SOON BEGIN.

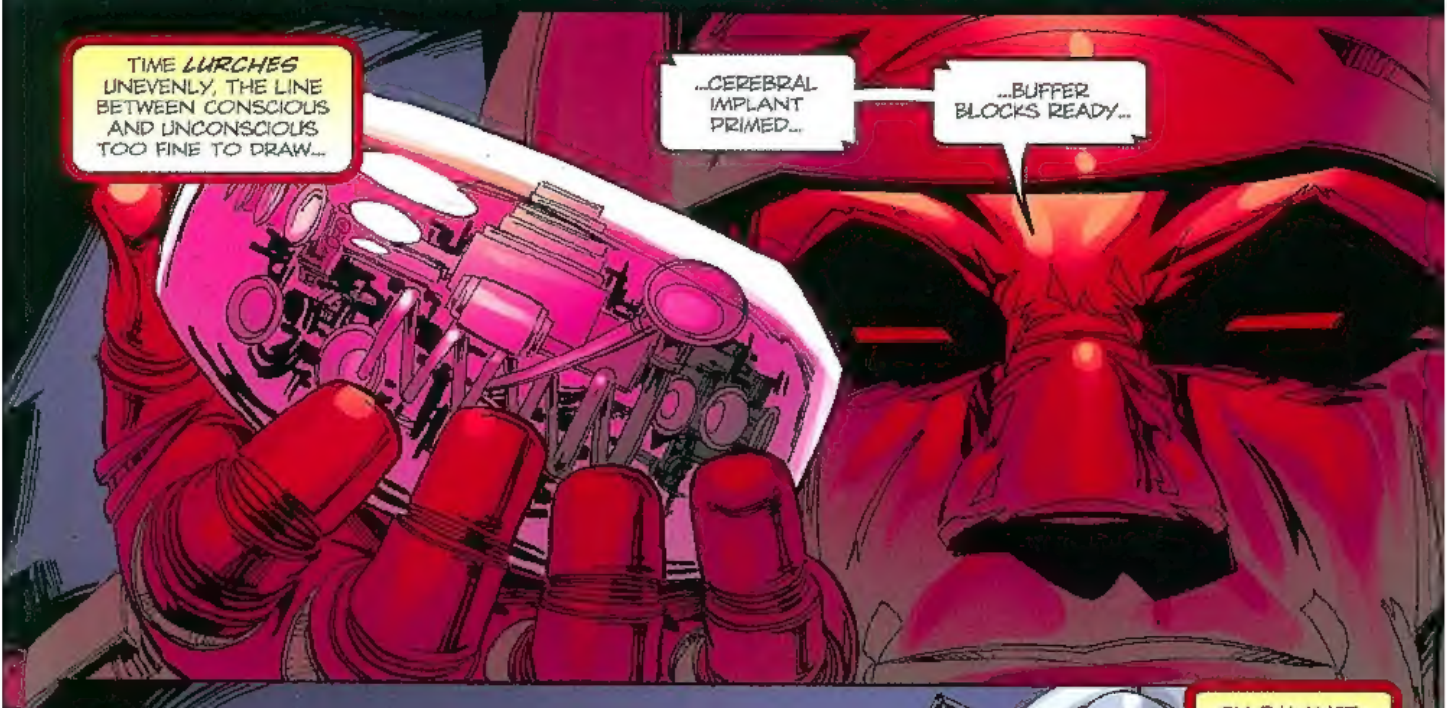
...THE VOICES
SEEM FAR AWAY.

I CAN'T MOVE,
CAN'T SPEAK...

BUT I
UNDERSTAND.

THEY BROUGHT ME
HERE, LURED ME HERE.
THEY PREYED ON MY
QUEST TO UNCOVER
THE BIG TRUTHS...

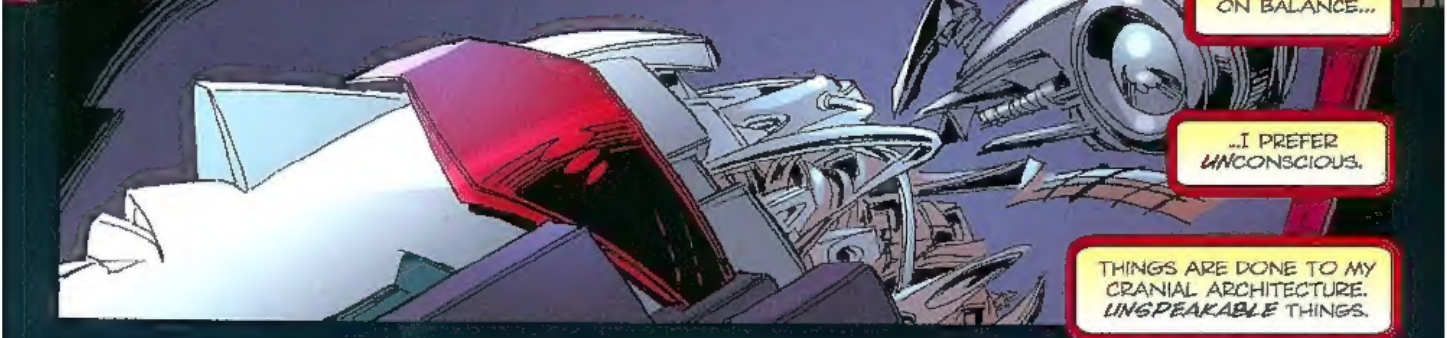
...AND REELED
ME IN.



TIME LURCHES
UNEVENLY, THE LINE
BETWEEN CONSCIOUS
AND UNCONSCIOUS
TOO FINE TO DRAW...

...CEREBRAL
IMPLANT
PRIMED...


...BUFFER
BLOCKS READY...




ON BALANCE...

...I PREFER
UNCONSCIOUS.

THINGS ARE DONE TO MY
CRANIAL ARCHITECTURE.
UNSPEAKABLE THINGS.



I CATCH RANDOM WORDS
AND PHRASES—"DEAD
UNIVERSE," "EMISSARY"—
UNTIL FINALLY...



WHEN WE ARE
READY, WE WILL CALL.
AND YOU... YOU WILL
KNOW WHAT TO DO!

AND THEN
NOTHING.

A ROUTINE SWEEP OF
THE DURZAN SECTOR
YIELDS LITTLE OF
INTEREST TO ME.

WHILE I ENJOY MY
FREE-RANGING, MOSTLY
SELF-STRUCTURED REMIT, IT
DOES GET A LITTLE
LONELY AT TIMES.

WHAT I NEED... IS A GOOD
MYSTERY TO OCCUPY MY
MIND, BUT IT SEEMS
MYSTERIES ARE IN SHORT
SUPPLY RIGHT NOW.



I CONSIDER DUSTING
OFF SOMETHING OLD
AND UNSOLVED.
MAYBE EVEN ONE OF
THE *BIG THREE*...



...BUT INSTEAD, A
CASE FINDS ME.

NIGHTBEAT, THIS
IS OPTIMUS
PRIME...

GO AHEAD,
PRIME.



I WANT YOU
TO RENDEZVOUS
WITH ARK-32 FOR
ONWARDS TRANSIT
TO EARTH. I...

...HAVE
NEED OF
YOUR SPECIAL
TALENTS.





UNDERSTOOD.
ON MY WAY—



UNH!

NIGHTBEAT?
ARE YOU
ALRIGHT?



I... I'M FINE.
IT'S *NOTHING*.
JUST A MINOR
CEREBRAL SURGE.

I'LL BE
WITH YOU
SHORTLY.

NIGHTBEAT
OUT.



NOTHING? I WONDER AS
THE PAIN SUBSIDES, I'M
LEFT WITH A NAGGING,
DISQUIETING FEELING...



...I'M MISSING
SOMETHING.

CARRIER
WAVE
RECEIVED AT
GAMMA-ZERO-
FOUR. ACTION?

The end

The Transformers: Spotlight #2 Nightbeat Cover Checklist



Cover A
MD Bright
Colors by
Josh Burcham



Cover RI A
James Raiz
Variant Cover
Colors by
Josh Burcham



Cover RI B
Nick Roche
Variant Cover
Colors by
Josh Burcham



2006 BotCon Exclusive
Sketch Cover
Front Cover Art by MD Bright
Back Cover Art by Nick Roche